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COACHING

DO YOU HAVE A STORY?

To help get us through our lives, we are all apt to create stories. Most of the time, we're not even aware that we're doing it – making stories that is – but we all do! These stories help us define our lives and make sense of our world, but once a story is embedded in your heart and mind, it can trap you into believing that your story is true – and most of the time it isn't – at least huge parts of it is open to a different interpretation. What's more your story often keeps you stuck, and can seriously hinder your self-development.

Let me share with you some of my stories so you can see what I mean.

I'm a single, attractive woman with lots to give to a relationship, but I scare men off because I've done and achieved a lot and my outlook and beliefs are not mainstream.

I always have just enough money for the things I need, but I always have to juggle with money.

I am fit and healthy, but my body just doesn't do slim.

My stories are embarrassingly full of limiting beliefs, and even though I know this, and in part these are my old stories, there is comfort in them and a bit of me still wants to hang on to them! So lets look at why we create our life stories, how we can start to change or ditch them so we can move on.

Why do we create these stories?

We create a story when a situation in our lives doesn't make sense, or when we're fearful that we're not fitting in. We create a reason that makes it OK with us – one that justifies our actions and/or beliefs. And when we don't want to look at an area of our lives that deep down we know isn't serving us well, we create wonderfully elaborate subterfuges to help us get away with it!

I don't fully understand the psychology behind it, but I know it's part of our coping mechanism that keeps us safe. But being in a comfort zone at the cost of leading a full,

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rich life is definitely not worth the price.

When we create a story, there are usually many elements of truth in the story. Few of us create total fabrications. Let me show you what I mean.

In my first story, the absolute truths are: I am single. And I have done lots of things in my life that most people don't get to do. The rest is my weaving of a story. Attractive – well, this is subjective. Are men really scared of what I have achieved? I could just as easily choose to believe that they would find this incredibly attractive. The same applies to my outlook on life – just as many men would like this aspect about me as don't. So what is the real reason for my story? By having this story, it lets me off the hook when I don't meet a man I want to be with. It also gives me permission to stay in that safe place of not dating men. This last aspect is one of the most intriguing parts of having a story. Because when I relate my story to friends, it sounds like I really want to find a new love, but in the same breath I'm blaming all men for not wanting to date me! Yet the truth is that there is a lot of fear of me starting to date again. Admitting this to my friends makes me feel uncomfortable – in part because of another truth. Because I have done so many big things, I assume that my friends would think less of me if I admitted to my fears around something as simple as dating! Of course, when it's written down like this, it makes me want to laugh out loud! How daft can you get? I know my friends not only understand, but they really want to help me. I'm sharing this with you to show you how easily you can tie yourself up in knots with your story.

What are your stories? What do you use as your excuse and/or reason for why things are the way they are, in your life? Are you ready to let go of them?

The little picture vs the bigger picture

When my clients are trying to unravel their own stories, one technique I use is to ask them to join me in the helicopter that is hovering above them and their story. From the helicopter view point, not only can they see their own story, but they can also see the stories of everyone else too. In this way they can get to see the bigger picture. Remember that everyone creates their story with elements of truth. The rest is woven around assumptions, fears and perceptions.

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If you were in the helicopter right now, with a truth flashlight, what are your truths? What are the truths of the other people? Are you assuming something? Have you checked out that assumption? One of the best ways of busting a story, is to simply ask other people what they think. It sounds so simple – and yet is one of the most powerful ways you can change the landscape of your story so it has greater breadth and is based on less assumptions, and has far more truth to it.

My challenge to you

Pick one of your life stories. If you want some inspiration consider these for ideas:

- My boss doesn't treat me well...
- My partner doesn't understand...
- I'm addicted to cigarettes (or alcohol, sugar, caffeine, adrenaline). I can't help it...
- My family are...
- I can't do that because...
- I would love to do that, but...
- My metabolism is slow...
- I'm too old to...
- If I didn't have a mortgage, I would...

Now write your story down. What parts are really true? Which bits are hiding your fears, or justifying your actions? If there are assumptions in your story that relate to others, who can you talk to, to find out more facts and truth? When will you ask them about it?

And finally...

Coaching is a great tool to help you unravel your stories. If you think my coaching could help, call or email me. And as always, if this tip has helped you, do let me know, because I love hearing from you!

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